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ABSTRACT

This project proposes the development and implementation of a model system for collecting, documenting, and reporting to the Atlanta (Georgia) Board of Education information that will indicate the number, ages, and grades of students dropping out of the Atlanta Public School System (APS). Furthermore, this project will demonstrate an effective systemic model for the early identification of at-risk students and the provision of programmatic interventions designed to preclude their dropping out. The following aspects of the project plan are discussed: (1) management; (2) early identification; (3) instructional adaptations; (4) behavior management; (5) "Celebration of Us," a self-esteem building program; (6) tutorials; (7) homework center; (8) Saturday school; (9) parental involvement; (10) certificate of merit; (11) support services; (12) alcohol and drug abuse prevention program; (13) health care; (14) education for employment; (15) staff development and training; (16) evaluation. As a result of this project, the APS will have in place the following: (1) an accurate student accountability prototype; (2) a process for the early identification of at-risk students; and (3) a successful systemic model for ameliorating the APS dropout problem. Overall management and coordination of this project belong to the APS-established Office of Dropout Prevention and Recovery; the project planning and advisory group is the Atlanta Collaborative for Dropout Prevention. (BJV)

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THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL'S DROPOUT INITIATIVE:

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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PROJECT SUMMARY

This project proposes the development and implementation of a model system for collecting, documenting, and reporting to the Atlanta Board of Education information which will indicate the number, ages, and grades of students dropping out of the Atlanta Public School System.

Further this project will demonstrate an effective systemic model for the early identification of at-risk students and the provision of programmatic interventions designed to preclude their dropping out. As a result of this project, the Atlanta Public School System will have in place an accurate student accountability prototype; a process for the early identification of at-risk students; and a successful systemic model for ameliorating the APS dropout problem.

SCHOOL DROPOUT DEMONSTRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Data Sheet

Please check the appropriate box.

[ ] Total enrollment of 100,000 or more elementary and secondary school students.

[X] Total enrollment of at least 20,000 but less than 100,000 elementary and secondary school students.

[ ] Total enrollment of less than 20,000 elementary and secondary school students, intermediate educational unit, or consortium. Check here if enrollment is less than 2,000 ____.

*Please check the box below if the applicant is a community-based organization.

[ ]

**Please check the box below if the applicant is submitting the application as an educational partnership. Then list the three members of the partnership and circle the type of organization.

[X]

(A) Atlanta Public School System
LEA

(B) National Alliance of Business
business concern, business organization, or community-based organization

(C) Greater Atlanta Conservation Corps
any nonprofit private organization, institution of higher education, State educational agency, State and local public agencies, private industry councils (established under the Job Training Partnership Act), museum, library, or educational television or broadcasting station, or community-based organization.

*Evidence of the applicant's non-profit status should be attached.

**Evidence of the applicant's non-profit status should be attached if the educational partnership includes a nonprofit private organization.

SCHOOL DROPOUT DEMONSTRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Absolute Priorities

Identify the priority under which you are submitting the application by marking the appropriate box.

[X]	Application shows the replication of successful programs conducted in other LEAs or the expansion of successful programs within an LEA.
[X]	Application reflects very high numbers or very high percentages of school dropouts in the applicant's schools.

Competitive Priorities: Special Considerations

Identify the special consideration under which you are submitting tne application by marking the appropriate box.

[X]	Application contains provisions that emphasize early intervention designed to identify at-risk students in elementary or early secondary schools.
[X]	Application contains provisions for significant parental involvement in the design and conduct of the program.

Invitational Priorities

Identify each invitational priority under which you are submitting tne application, if applicable.

[X]	Strong Instructional Leadership
[X]	An Emphasis on Basic Skills
[X]	High Teacher Expectation
[X]	A Positive Impact on the Family

SCHOOL DROPOUT DEMONSTRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Data Sheet

Please provide the information set forth below on the number and percentage of children who were enrolled in the applicants' schools for 5 academic years prior to the date of this application who have not completed their elementary or secondary education and who are classified as dropout students.

School Year	No. Dropout Students	Total Enrollment	Percentage of Dropo
1986-87	7,102	71,732	10
1985-86	6,252	72,112	9
1984-85	5,231	71,315	7
1983-84	5,285	71,813	7
1982-83	5,207	72,864	7

Applicant's Definition of a Dropout:

The Atlanta Board of Education has adopted the following definition of a dropout: A dropout is a person who enrolled in the Atlanta Public School System and exited without completing a planned educational program, for some reason other than death, and who did not transfer to another educational system or program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL'S DROPOUT INITIATIVE: A DEMONSTRATION DROPOUT PROJECT

OVERVIEW

Goal: To initiate activities to reduce the number of students exiting the Atlanta Public Schools without completing a planned educational program.

This project proposes the development and implementation of a model system for collecting, documenting, and reporting (on an annual basis to the Atlanta Board of Education) information which will indicate the number, ages, and grades of students dropping out of the Atlanta Public School System.

Additionally, this project will demonstrate an effective systemic model for the early identification of at-risk students and the provision of programmatic interventions designed to preclude their dropping out.

By attaining project objectives, the Atlanta Public School System will be able to accurately and consistently measure the magnitude of its dropout problem.

PROJECT PLAN

Management

Responsibility for the overall management and coordination of this project is placed with the APS-established Office of Dropout Prevention and Recovery (ODPR). Administration of the numerous school-based activities detailed in this project will be the responsibility of the principals of the four target schools. Staff support services will be provided by the applicable APS branches.

The overall project planning and advisory group is the Atlanta Collaborative for Dropout Prevention. The school-based aspect of this project will have a Site Advisory Committee. This group will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the project in the four target schools, and community sites, and

for recommending any changes in activities/services. A report will be forwarded from the Site Advisory Committee to the Atlanta Collaborative on a monthly basis.

Model Data Collection and Reporting System

The Office of Dropout Prevention and Recovery (ODPR) will be responsible for developing a consistent uniform procedure for collecting and reporting dropout data for the Atlanta Public School System.

Identification and Programming for Dropout Prevention

This component of the project will be implemented in Carver High School, its feeder middle school, (Price) and the two primary feeder elementary schools (Campbell and Slater). This portion of the project will entail adaptations in instructional delivery, experiential learning options, tutorials, counseling and supplemental services, education for employment, parental involvement, and staff development/training.

Early Identification

A system for identifying at-risk students at grades Pre-K, K-1, 6 and 9 will be an integral part of this project. Identification of students at risk of dropping out is focused on these grades because they are the point of entry at the elementary, middle, and secondary schools.

Instructional Adaptations

The selected adaptations in instructional delivery have been selected from those school-based initiatives which haved been found to help reduce the dropout problem. Those initiatives are developmental early childhood programs; modification of the educational milieu; competency-based progress at the primary level; intensive individualized assistance; experiential education; alternative educational settings; and collaboration in the provision of special programs and services. This project will use the extended day approach for the provision of assistance aimed at alleviating difficulties in mastering learner behaviors and for the provision of essential special programs.

Pre-K

The predominant number of Pre-K participants will be offspring of students currently enrolled in one of the target schools or who will be willing to re-enroll if child development services were provided. Children of these teen parents will be placed in a full-day child development program designed to meet the needs of both child and parent. This program will operate in the day care facilities currently in operation at the target schools.

Campbell and Slater Elementary Schools

At the two target elementary schools, a continuous progress model will be implemented in K-3 within which a hierachy of learner behaviors necessary for success at grade 4 will be delineated. Students at these levels (K-3) will move through the appropriate skills at their own rate of progress. Instruction will be learner supportive and designed to foster the development of positive self-esteem.

Price Middle School

At the middle school level all entering 6th graders will be assigned to a homeroom teacher who will serve as his/her administrative and counseling link with the school, other students, and parents. These teachers will be trained in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Atlanta University, to serve as advocates for these entering students. In addition, they and students from the seventh and eighth grade, will provide an indepth orientation program.

Those identified at-risk seventh and eighth graders will be involved in the Diversified Educational Experience Program (DEEP).

Carver High School

Carver freshmen (9th graders) will be assigned to homeroom teachers who will serve as their administrative-counseling link with the school, other students, and parents. These teachers (trained by the Department of Counseling and Human Development at Atlanta University) shall serve as facilitators for the successful

transition of these students to high school. They along with the student leaders will provide an indepth orientation program.

Those entering ninth graders, in addition to identified at-risk tenth and eleventh graders will also be involved in DEEP.

The school day at the high school level will be extended by fifty-five minutes, Monday through Thursday for the project participants. Tutorial and essential supplemental activities will be provided during this time.

Behavior Management

An in-school suspension program will be implemented at the upper elementary and middle school levels to provide support and academic services to those students whose behavior makes it necessary to temporarily remove them from the general student population.

"Celebration of Us"

The "Celebration of Us" program is a self-esteem building, cultural inclusion program. This program is designed to celebrate the cultural experience of the students in the target schools in an effort to bolster their group self-concept and personal self-esteem.

Tutorials

Tutorial activities provide benefits with respect to achievement gains for tutors as well as those students being tutored. Tutorials for this project will follow one of three formats: cross-age, cross-ability, and student-adult.

All tutorial activities will be supervised by a teacher certified in the instructional areas of focus.

Homework Center

The homework center will be centrally located in space provided in Carver Homes. Operating from 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, the Center will be managed by a parent who is a resident of Carver Homes. Academic supervision will be provided by a team of teachers from the target schools.

Saturday School

A Saturday school program emphasizing experiential opportunities and utilizing the city as the classroom will be offered from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each Saturday during the school year. A series of discussants from throughout the Metropolitan Atlanta Community will be utilized to introduce various topics. The Rites of Passage groups will also be a part of the Saturday School.

Parental Involvement

The parental involvement effort utilizes the Atlanta Council of PTA's as its operational base. Parents at all levels in the target schools will enter into contracts stating how they will help their sons/daughters plan, at least, an annual non-fundraising social event (a dinner, picnic, sports festival, or play, etc.) which will involve all students and parents in each of the targeted schools; actively participate in the Rites of Passage Groups and participate in a series of parental educational activities will be held during the first six-to-nine weeks of the school year.

Counseling and Supplemental Services

The counselors in the target schools are to provide scheduled counseling sessions for the identified at-risk students, while providing crisis intervention services as needed the school counselor(s) will also have prime responsibility for insuring that the records of any referred student are continuously updated with respect to services provided and outcomes. The Support Services Network, established by the Collaborative, will be the conduit for referrals.

Certificate of Merit

The Ceritificate of Merit activity will be implemented in each target elementary school-based upon guidelines cooperatively established by the local advisory council. Certificate of Merit will be awarded by classroom teachers for accomplishments of an academic, social, artistic, athletic, or personal nature.

Support Services

Many of the needs of students "at risk" for dropping out of school go beyond the purview and resources of the school. The Atlanta Collaborative, through its Support Services Subcommittee, brought together many of the agencies in the metropolitan Atlanta community which offer services and programs from which these students can benefit. This support services network will be a coordinating process which efficiently links at-risk students with the services and programs they need.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Program

Youth in the target community face a special risk for drug culture involvement and subsequent school-leaving. A special program, including target middle and high school staff-in-service, will be provided by the Cork Institute on Black Alcohol and Drug Abuse at the Morehouse School of Medicine.

In addition to the Cork Institute's program for at-risk students, the Greater Atlanta Conservation Corps, Inc. will provide a schoolwide program for each of the target schools.

Health Care

The targeted schools have been adopted by HealthSouth. This group has worked out a cooperative arrangement with the Fulton County Health Department. As a result of this arrangement, HealthSouth has agreed to provide rehabilitative and preventive health services to all students in the target schools.

Education for Employment

Subcomponent I is to initiate a pilot "Atlanta Compact" between the targeted school and segments of the Atlanta Business Community.

Subcomponent II will be a pre-employment program operated out of Georgia State as an adjunct to an existing program targeted at dropouts and potential dropouts.

Subcomponent III will build upon the successful experience of the various Conservation Corps projects in Atlanta and around the country. A special after school Conservation Corps crew will be established as a pilot project.

Subcomponent IV will be conducted by the Atlanta Area Council Explorer Division of the Boy Scouts of America and will provide career awareness services to all 9th and 10th grade students enrolled in Carver High School.

Subcomponent V will be conducted by APS Vocational Education Department. Services will be provided for identified at-risk students in grades 9 and 10. Entering ninth graders will be enrolled in the CVAE (Coordinated Vocational and Academic Education) Program where there will be provided educational support and advocacy by the CVAE Coordinator.

Overall coordination for the Education for Employment Component will be performed by Georgia State University and the Atlanta Dropout Collaborative Employment Subcommittee.

Staff Development/Training

In order to implement this project, it will be necessary to re-orient and/or re-train existing APS personnel in the four targeted schools as well as persons recruited to staff specific program parts. Personnel involved in this component of the project will be provided from sixteen to one hundred and twenty plus hours of staff development during the proposed twenty-four month period. In additon to personnel, a minimum of 50 hours will be set aside to provide training to the parents of the students in the four targeted schools. Ten of these hours will be used to train the PTA Officers at the

targeted schools, the remaining 40 hours will be focused on training parents to become active participants in the education of their offspring.

EVALUATION

The proposed project will have an internal evaluation conducted by the APS Department of Research and Evaluation and an external evaluation conducted by the Southern Education Foundation. These goals, objectives, and expected outcomes will comprise the measures, by which the success of this project will be assessed.

Management of the evaluation plan will be the responsibility of the Office of Dropout Prevention and Recovery in cooperation with the Atlanta Collaborative.